



**SIERRA CLUB, SAN DIEGO CHAPTER**  
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California Coastal Commission, (San Diego Office)  
Chairperson, Sara Wan  
7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 103  
San Diego, CA 92108

June 29, 2002

**Re: North Torrey Pines Road Bridge Replacement Project, LDR No. 98-0335**

Dear Coastal Commissioners:

The San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club understands that the North Torrey Pines Bridge must be replaced for safety reasons. While we prefer a design that is narrower, we have been informed by San Diego City staff that a narrower design would be more costly (millions), cause about two years of delay (barring any further unforeseen delays), and would be much more disruptive to daily traffic during construction. As such, we support going forward with replacement as planned by the City.

It is our understanding that the bridge will be striped for two traffic lanes and the added width of the bridge will not be used for another lane of vehicle traffic but will instead improve transit, pedestrian and bicycling options. This is an important condition of the proposal that we support.

Replacement of the 72 support columns with a four-column design will improve tidal flushing of the lagoon and hopefully eliminate the need for periodic clearing of sediment at the lagoon mouth. If sediment build-up and blockage continues to be a problem, the City of San Diego should commit, in perpetuity, to fully fund removal of sediment from the inlet to restore tidal flushing. Clearing of sediment build up will be greatly simplified with fewer columns/obstacles. Maintaining the tidal flushing is important for human health and safety reasons as well as protection of the important tidal habitat values including fish nurseries and bird foraging. Blockage can cause unhealthy build-up of bacteria levels in the lagoon which could result in days of beach closures when tidal flushing is finally restored. Blockage can also result in fish kills and endangerment of the many bird species that feed on the fish. It is incumbent upon the City to maintain the natural functions of this important resource and counter the many unnatural sources of sediment and impediments to healthy tidal flushing.

**Also, careful environmental monitoring during and after construction must take place. Thank you for consideration of our comments**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Bowlby".

Eric Bowlby  
Co-Chair, Coastal Committee  
San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club

cc Honorable Councilmember Scott Peters, City of San Diego